

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> OF  
APRIL 2020 BY MEANS OF TELECONFERENCE**

PRESENT:	Councillor	William Aird	In The Chair
	Councillors	Conor Bergin	Paddy Bracken
		Ben Brennan	Ollie Clooney
		Thomasina Connell	Caroline Dwane Stanley
		John Joe Fennelly	Padraig Fleming
		John King	Seamus McDonald
		Paschal McEvoy	Aisling Moran
		Tom Mulhall	Aidan Mullins
		Mary Sweeney	James Kelly
		Catherine Fitzgerald	Noel Tuohy

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Messers John Mulholland, Chief Executive, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Donal Brennan, Director of Services, Simon Walton, Director of Services, Joe Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, A.O., & Ms. Michelle McCormack, S.O.

**51. VOTE OF SYMPATHY**

Councillor William Aird, Cathaoirleach proposed the following Vote of Sympathies:

- Ms. Ruth Barry, Veterinary Officer with Laois County Council on the death of her brother, Mr. John Barry, Caherconlish, Limerick
- Ms. Teresa Bergin, Laois County Council on the death of her mother, Mrs. Mary Bergin, Ballymeelish, Ballybrophy, Co. Laois.

Councillor Aisling Moran, Thomasina Connell & Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed a vote of sympathy to Ms. Mary Sweeney, M.C.C. and the McDonald family on the death of Mr. Jim McDonald, Newtown, Ballyroan, Co. Laois.

Councillor Tom Mulhall proposed the following Votes of Sympathies:

- The Flynn family on the death of Mr. William Flynn, Courtwood, Ballybrittas, Co. Laois.
- The Miller family on the death of Mr. Sean Miller, Vicarstown, Portlaois, Co. Laois.
- The Carroll family on the death of Mr. Edward Carroll, Killimy Road, Emo, Co. Laois.

Councillor Paschal McEvoy proposed the following Vote of Sympathies:

- Ms. Doreen Delaney on the death of her husband, Mr. Danny Delaney, Cork Road, Stradbally, Co. Laois.
- The Laffan family on the death of Ms. Mary Laffan, Ballycoolan, Stradbally, Co. Laois.

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald & John Joe Fennelly proposed the following Vote of Sympathy

- The Fennell & Whelan Families on the death of Ms. Darragh Fennell, Glenbrook, Ballyroan, Co. Laois.

Councillor Conor Bergin proposed the following Vote of Sympathies:

- The Egan family on the death of Mr. Sean Egan, Borris-in-Ossosry, Co. Laois.
- The Shirley family on the death of Ms. Louise Elizabeth Shirley, Oldglass, Ballacolla, Co. Laois.

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following Vote of Sympathy

- The Tynan Family on the death of Ms. Una Tynan, Old Road, Ballydavis, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Councillor Paddy Bracken proposed the following Vote of Sympathy

- The Conroy Family on the death of Mr. Joe Conroy, Gurteen, Rosenallis, Co. Laois.

Councillor Ollie Clooney proposed the following Vote of Sympathy:-

- The O' Brien Family on the death of Mr. Finbar O' Brien, Cork Road, Durrow, Co. Laois.

Councillor Ben Brennan proposed the following Vote of Sympathies

- The Egan Family on the death of Mr. Eddie Egan, Aughaterry, Ballickmoyler, Carlow
- The Bolton Family on the death of Ms. Colette Bolton, Lower Rossmore, Carlow
- The Scully Family on the death of Mr. Patrick Scully, Killeshin, Carlow

Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald proposed a vote of sympathy to the residents in the Maryborough Centre who recently passed away and also that a letter issue to the healthcare staff of the Maryborough Centre to compliment them on the excellent care provided in the unit during these very challenging times.

## **52. VOTE OF CONGRATULATIONS**

The Members unanimously passed a vote of congratulations to the 'Do It For Dan' recent fundraiser and complimented everyone involved in the campaign for a very good cause and wished Dan every success in his future treatment.

## **53. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 30<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 2020**

On the proposition of Councillor Seamus McDonald seconded by Councillor John King, the Members unanimously agreed to the minutes of the March meeting of Laois County Council held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.

**54. ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2019 INCLUDING APPROVAL OF OVER-EXPENDITURE AND TRANSFERS TO CAPITAL**

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance briefed the Members on the Annual Financial Statement 2019 including the approval of over-expenditure and transfers to capital. On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall, the Members unanimously agreed the Annual Financial Statement 2019 including approval of over-expenditure and transfers to capital as presented.

**55. REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance briefed the Members on the report on Development Contributions which had been circulated. On the proposition of Councillor Willie Aird seconded by Councillor Pdraig Fleming, the Members unanimously agreed the report on Development Contributions as presented.

**56. UPDATE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON THE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive referred to his report issued on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 and briefed the members on the contents of same including an update on the service delivery areas at this time.

Members noted that the Community Response Helpline is ongoing from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week and is working very well. A significant amount of resources have gone into collaboration with stakeholders to stabilise the response. The Members complimented Laois County Council on this initiative.

In the Housing Department, It was noted that a range of services are continuing and that in particular work has restarted on the completion of social housing estates on the Borris Road, Portlaoise, Kilnacourt, Portarlinton and on the Main Street in Stradbally. Planning and preparations are ongoing with other schemes also. Contracts are in the final stage of completion for the purchase of the 25.76 acres of land in Portlaoise on the Stradbally Road.

The Members expressed concern in relation to the increase in illegal dumping around the County and also in relation to the reduced opening hours of the waste and recycling facilities.

Mr. Simon Walton, Director of Services indicated that, in recent weeks, in line with public health guidelines and in order to allow for the development of suitable, revised Safe Systems for Work, regular Litter Patrols had been restricted and, as a consequence,

illegal dumping has been far more visible. Now that appropriate work systems have been put into place Litter Wardens are conducting and/or arranging clean ups at various litter blackspots throughout the County. He noted that the “illegal dumping epidemic” referred to during the meeting was caused by the fact that, temporarily, Litter Wardens could not attend to the clearing of litter blackspots in the normal way.

Mr. Walton also noted that residual waste disposal facilities at Kyletelesha are open 3 days per week since 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2020. This followed a brief closure, effective from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. Similarly he noted that Civic Amenity Sites at Kyletelesha and Portarlinton were re-opened on a 3 day per week basis since 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2020, having been closed from 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020. He also confirmed that, as and from 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2020, both Civic Amenity Sites would reopen to normal opening hours.

In relation to the Community Development area, following the announcement this week regarding the cancellation of the National Tidy Towns Competition members expressed concern regarding funding for Tidy Towns Committees. Mr. Donal Brennan, Director of Services indicated that funding would still be made available to the various communities. In relation to the new funding scheme which was made available by the Department of Rural and Community the members expressed concern in relation to the short timeframe - it was noted that the closing date for the first call from the fund was April 29<sup>th</sup> with a second call to flow later in May of 2020 to allow some further applications for the balance of the fund.

The Members raised concerns in relation to businesses, borrowers and tenants in respect of their ability to pay rates, loan instalments and rents. It was noted that the Head of Finance had confirmed at the March meeting a rate deferral for a period of three months for businesses impacted by Covid-19. Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald requested that no further rate bills be issued to ratepayers in 2020 until the Pandemic was over. This proposition was seconded by Councillor John King. Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance confirmed that all rates bills for 2020 issued in early March 2020 prior to Covid-19 restrictions. Bills issued since then were either by request or where there was a change of ownership.

In relation to council mortgages, Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance indicated that borrowers who avail of the Home Loan Mortgage Payment Break Break will see their monthly repayments increase. This is necessary to ensure that the home loan will be repaid in full within its original term. No interest is charged during the Break. Applications under the scheme are being examined.

Businesses, Mortgagees and Tenants are encouraged to contact Laois County Council if they find themselves in difficulty.

**55. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor James Kelly raised the following issues:-

- Representation of the technical group on the Corporate Policy Group during the Covid-19 crisis
- Correspondence from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government to the AILG with regard to the current arrangements for Council meetings during the COVID1- national emergency. Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive indicated that alternatives for the holding of Council Meetings would be considered. Laois County Council are also examining means of holding the MD Meetings going forward to meet with the Members requirements. The Members were advised by the Chief Executive that national guidance is awaited.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**SIGNED:**

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**CATHAOIRLEACH**

**CERTIFIED:**

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**DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
CORPORATE AFFAIRS**